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TALEEM & TARBIYYAT MAGAZINE FOR WAQFEEN-E-NAU

ISSUE 08

TEN CONDITIONS OF BAI'AT

INITIATION INTO THE AHMADIYYA MUSLIM JAMA'AT

I

The initiate shall solemnly promise that he/she shall abstain from shirk [associating any partner with God] right up to the day of his/her death.

II

That he/she shall keep away from falsehood, fornication/adultery, trespasses of the eye, debauchery, dissipation, cruelty, dishonesty, mischief and rebellion; and that he/she will not permit himself/herself to be carried away by passions, however strong they might be.

III

That he/she shall regularly offer the five daily Prayers in accordance with the commandments of God and the Holy Prophet Muhammadsa and shall try his/her best to be regular in offering the tahajjud and invoking durud on the Holy Prophet Muhammadsa. That he/she shall make it his/her daily routine to ask forgiveness for his/her sins, to remember the bounties of God and to praise and glorify Him.

IV

That under the impulse of any passions, he/she shall cause no harm whatsoever to the creatures of God in general and Muslims in particular, neither by his/her tongue, hands, nor any other means.

V

That he/she shall remain faithful to God in all circumstances of life, in sorrow and in happiness, in adversity and in prosperity, in felicity and in trial; and that he/she shall in all conditions remain resigned to the decree of God and keep himself/ herself ready to face all kinds of indignities and sufferings in His way and shall never turn away from Him at the onslaught of any misfortune; on the contrary, he/she shall march forward.

VI

That he/she shall refrain from following un-Islamic customs and lustful inclinations and shall completely submit himself/herself to the authority of the Holy Qur'an; and that he/she shall make the Word of God and the sayings of the Holy Prophet Muhammadsa his/her guiding principles in every walk of his/her life.

VII

That he/she shall entirely give up pride and vanity and shall pass all his/her life in humbleness, cheerfulness, forbearance and meekness.

VIII

That he/she shall hold faith, the honour of faith and the cause of Islam dearer than his/her life, wealth, honour, children, and all loved ones.

IX

That he/she shall keep himself/herself occupied in the service of God's creatures for His sake only and shall endeavour towards the beneficence of mankind to the best of his/her God-given abilities and powers.

X

That he/she shall enter into a bond of brotherhood with this humble servant of God, pledging obedience to me in everything good for the sake of God, and remain faithful to it until the day of his/her death. That he/she shall exert such a high devotion in the observance of this bond as is not to be found in any other worldly relationship and connection that demand devoted dutifulness.

(Ishtihar Takmil-e-Tabligh, January 12, 1889)

FROM THE EDITOR

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This magazine is an instrument of bringing us Waqifeen closer to realising the mission which lies ahead of us. The task is not an easy one. The world will actually tell us that it is impossible. Our purpose is to serve the world with the words of the Imam of the time; to inform the world of the true purpose of their creation.

The propagation of Islam Ahmadiyyat is a must. This is in exact accordance with the Quranic verse, "Convey to the people what has been revealed to thee from thy Lord". Thus, where we realise that Tabligh is a must for all of us standing on the front line, we must also realise what we truly believe in.

We all have a deep love for our faith and feel a deep connection with our master, Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings of Allah be on him. We have acknowledged that the only true servant of the Prophet[sa] whose mission runs directly under the guidelines of the Prophet Muhammad[sa] and the Holy Quran is Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad[as]. We firmly declare that Khilafat is the only true source of guidance and the leadership that bears the most significance in the present day. These are all facts that must be accepted by every Ahmadi man and woman. But surely there must be something unique about people who have dedicated their lives for the Jama'at!

Time and time again, Huzoor reminds us Waqifeen to increase our knowledge, both religious and secular. The treasure the Promised Messiah[as] left behind for us needs to be discovered first in order for it to be a true treasure. Hazrat Khalifatul-Masih guides us every Friday on every aspect of life. But how many of us are truly reaping the benefits of those words of wisdom.

Our leaders and Imams have worked day and night to provide us with a never-ending treasure. They put their blood, sweat and tears into bringing us closer to our Creator and the true purpose of life. We must ensure that their efforts never go in vain.

The study of religion is necessary. Without it, we can never truly know what we believe. Every field and every science requires study so why do we not think about studying our own beliefs. Plus, the study of our faith has been made very easy for us. The articles, books and sermons that the Jama'at has published are in their thousands! So, why not pick up one, and try to take ourselves back to our true purpose of life.

WELCOME TO
ISMAEL MAGAZINE

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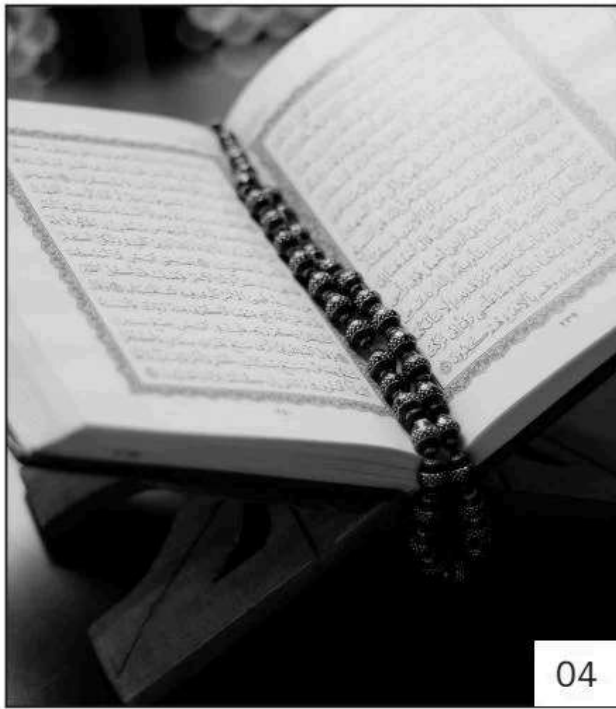
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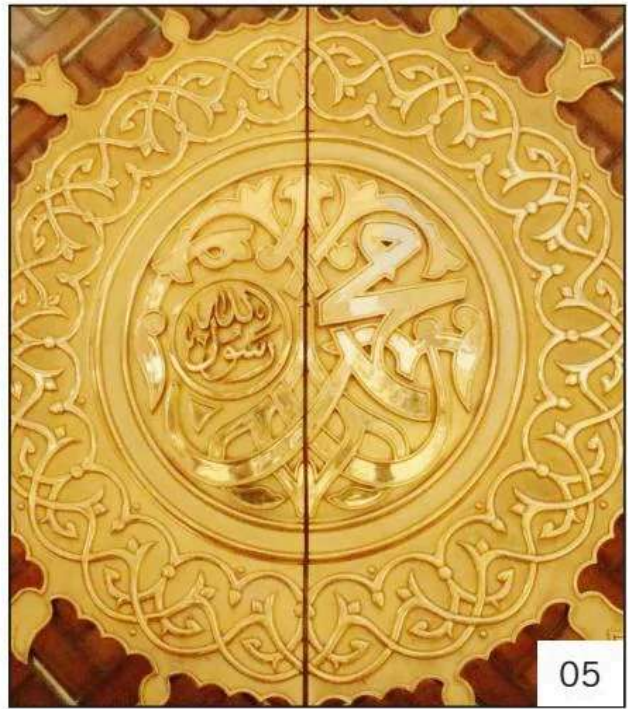
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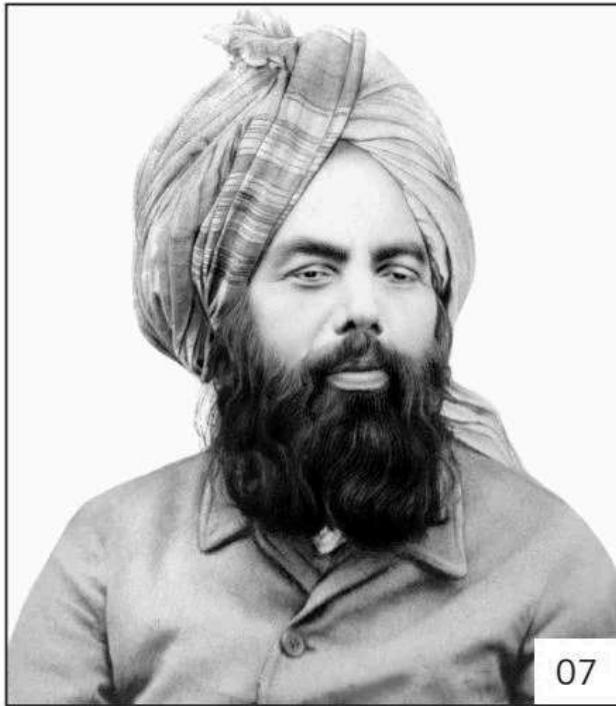
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THE HOLY

QURAN

بِسْمِ ٱللَّهِ ٱلرَّحْمَٰنِ ٱلرَّحِيمِ

وَٱلتِّينِ وَٱلزَّيْتُونِ ﴿٢﴾ وَطُورِ سِينِينَ ﴿٣﴾ وَهَٰذَا ٱلْبَلَدِ
ٱلْأَمِينِ ﴿٤﴾ لَقَدْ خَلَقْنَا ٱلْإِنسَٰنَ فِىٓ أَحْسَنِ تَقْوِيمٍ
﴿٥﴾ ثُمَّ رَدَدْنَٰهُ أَسْفَلَ سَٰفِلِينَ ﴿٦﴾ إِلَّا ٱلَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا۟
وَعَمِلُوا۟ ٱلصَّٰلِحَٰتِ فَلَهُمْ أَجْرٌ غَيْرُ مَمْنُونٍ ﴿٧﴾
فَمَا يُكَذِّبُكَ بَعْدُ بِٱلدِّينِ ﴿٨﴾
أَلَيْسَ ٱللَّهُ بِأَحْكَمِ ٱلْحَٰكِمِينَ ﴿٩﴾

1. In the name of Allah, the Gracious, the Merciful
2. By the Fig and the Olive,
3. And by Mount Sinai,
4. And by this Town, the abode of peace
5. Surely, We have created man in the best of creative plans.
6. Then, We reverted him to the state of the lowest of the low.
7. Except those who believe and do good works; so for them is an unending reward.
8. Then what is there to give the lie to thee after this with regard to the Judgement?
9. Is not Allah the Best of judges?

HADITH

عَنْ أَبِيْ هُرَيْرَةَ رَضِيَ اللّٰهُ عَنْهُ قَالَ:
قَالَ رَسُوْلُ اللّٰهِ صَلَّى اللّٰهُ عَلَيْهِ وَ سَلَّمَ:
"قَارِبُوْا وَ سَدِّدُوْا فَإِنَّهُ لَيْسَ أَحَدٌ مِنْكُمْ بِمُنْجِيْهِ عَمَلُهُ." قَالُوْا
وَلاَ أَنْتَ يَا رَسُوْلَ اللّٰهِ ؟ قَالَ:
"وَلاَ أَنَا، إِلَّا أَنْ يَتَغَمَّدَنِيَ اللّٰهُ بِرَحْمَةٍ مِنْهُ وَ فَضْلٍ."

(ابن ماجه، كتاب الزهد)

Hazrat Abu Hurairah, may Allah be pleased with him, narrated that the Holy Prophet, peace and blessings of Allah be on him, said:

'Be moderate and adhere to moderation, for there is no one among you who will be saved by his deeds.' They said: 'Not even you, O Messenger of Allah?' He said: 'Not even me. Unless Allah encompasses me with mercy and grace from Him.'

(Sunan Ibn-e-Majah, Kitab Al-Zuhd)

COMMENTARY ON THE HOLY QURAN

Concerning the aforementioned verses, Hazrat Mirza Tahir Ahmad, Khalifatul Masih IV[rt] says:

'In this [chapter], an unending evolution has been foretold. Herein, the *Tin* [Fig] and *Zaitun* [Olive] have been called on as witnesses, in other words Prophets Adam[as] and Noah[as], and the *Tur-e-Sinin* [Mount of Sinai], in other words that same mountain of Prophet Moses[as] where God Almighty manifested Himself. Lastly the *Baladil Amin* [the abode of peace] has been called on as a witness which was the abode of the Holy Prophet of Islam, peace and blessings of Allah be on him.

'With this gradual spiritual evolution, Allah has also pointed out how He has elevated man from low levels to the highest levels of evolution. However, those of ill-fortune who do not seek benefit from this are returned to the lowest ranks of those who turned back. Thus, a never ending and revolving evolution has been referred to here. But those who believe and do good works will be gifted with unlimited spiritual progress. Therefore, those who despite this, reject the Prophet Muhammad[sa] in matters of faith, Allah is sufficient for them as a Judge.'

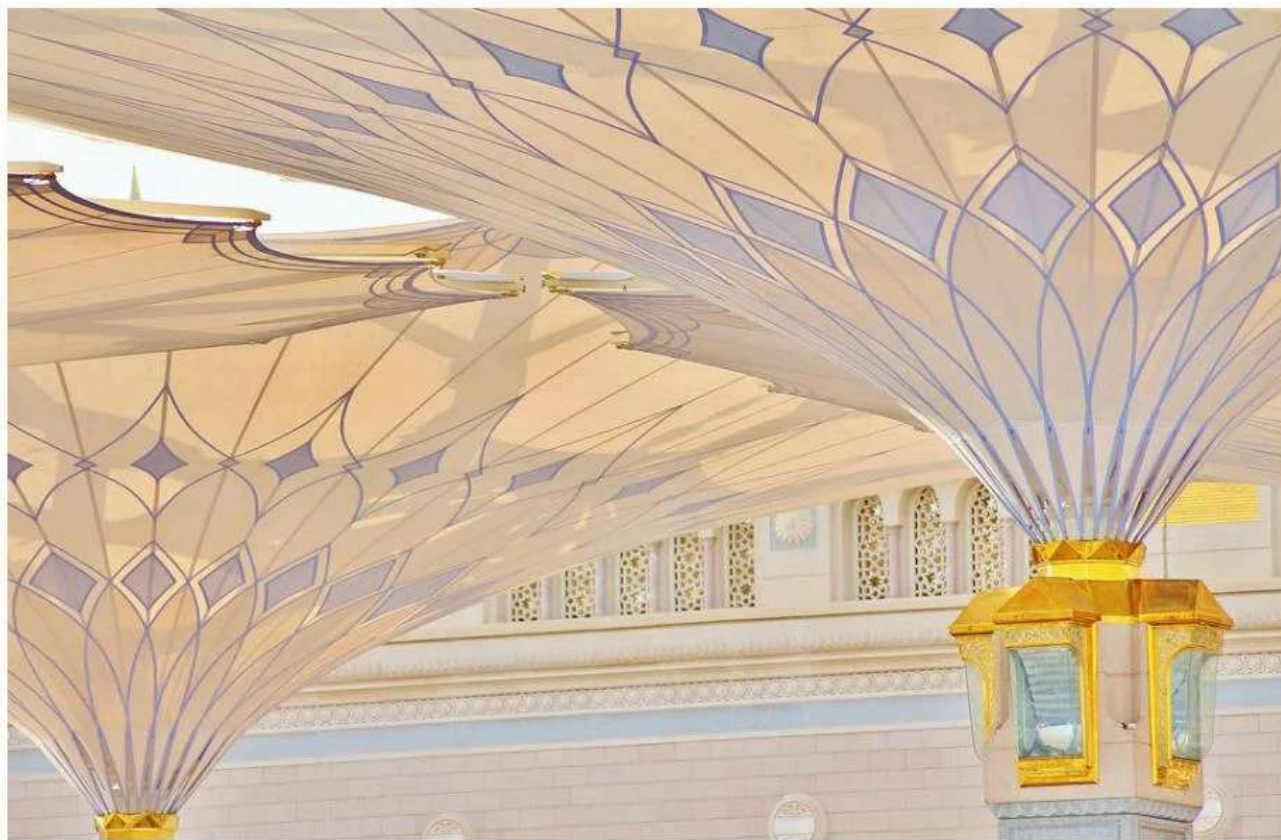
(Hazrat Mirza Tahir Ahmad, Khalifatul-Masih IV[rt], Introduction to Surah Al-Tin, In: The Holy Quran with Urdu Translation, Islam Int'l Publications Ltd., 2007, p. 1188)

EXCERPT FROM THE WRITINGS OF THE PROMISED MESSIAH[AS]

ALL PROPHETS COME FOR THE SAME PURPOSE

'The main purpose of the advent of Prophets[as] in this world and the grand objective of their teaching and preaching is that mankind should recognise God Almighty and should be delivered from the life which leads to hell and ruin and which is known as the life of sin. In fact, this is the most important objective before them.

'Now that God Almighty has established a dispensation and has raised me, the same purpose which is common to all Prophets is also the purpose of my coming, namely, that I wish not only to tell the world what God is, but I actually want them to see Him, and to show them the way of desisting from sin.'

[Malfuzat, Vol. 3, p.11]

JIHAD AND ISIS

BY HAARIS HAMAAD MUIN AHMAD

Hamaad is currently studying Medicine in Czech Republic. He aspires to be a doctor and serve the Jama'at as a Waqif-e-Nau in this field.

For the last few years, the so called Islamic state, ISIS has been on the rise and has occupied territory in Syria and Iraq. Their core objective is to strike fear in the hearts of non-Muslims and force them to convert to Islam. They have misinterpreted the Qur'an and the actions of our Noble Prophet, Muhammad, peace and blessings of Allah be on him: the holy founder of Islam.

To understand where these radicals of Islam have sought their beliefs from we must ponder upon the term Jihad. Jihad derives from the term Jahada connoting endurance against rigorous conditions. Thus, its core meaning is to strive to the utmost for an achievement. The Jihad is in three types: Jihad e Akbar (the greatest jihad), Jihad e Kabeer (waged against Satan) and finally Jihad e Asghar (waged against enemies of freedom). ISIS believe Jihad e Asghar is the Jihad more prevalent today, however this was only prescribed to the Prophet Muhammad[sa] and the Muslims at that time, because they had been driven out of their homes and were given no freedom. This is not the case today. ISIS is simply not educated enough to fathom this and have unfortunately misinterpreted the Holy Quran's serene teachings.

When Jihad e Asghar was prescribed to the Holy Founder of Islam, Muhammad[sa], he commanded his followers to 'not commit treachery or deviate from the right path. You must not mutilate dead bodies. Neither kill a child, nor a woman, nor an

aged man. Bring no harm to the trees, nor burn them with fire, especially those which are fruitful. You are likely to pass by people who have devoted their lives to monastic services; leave them alone.' Now ask yourself, are ISIS abiding by these commandants? Certainly not!

> *For those who are unaware of Islam's core teachings, Islam itself means peace. One commandant that falls into this teaching is to obey the law of the land as well as Islam's Shariah law*

ISIS has caused nothing but terror in Syria and Iraq and has led to travel bans and restrictions. A Foreign Office spokesman said 'We advise against all but essential travel to large parts... anyone who does travel to these areas for whatever reason is putting themselves in considerable danger'. Jihad e Asghar is to be used against enemies of freedom. ISIS is taking away many freedoms of the residents of the Middle Eastern countries and the world. This is the opposite of Jihad e Asghar and in fact, ISIS is the enemy of freedom here. Is this anything remotely close to the true teachings of Islam? However, we should not be tricked into waging war against ISIS, this is wrong. In this day and age, Jihad e Akbar is the greatest Jihad that one can perform. By completely reforming oneself and integrating into society, Muslims can win the hearts of the world. Is this not better than waging war against non-believers?

For those who are unaware of Islam's core teachings, Islam itself means peace. One commandant that falls into this teaching is to obey the law of the land as well as Islam's Shariah law. So even if Jihad e Asghar was permitted today it will have to be done in a way that obeys the law of the land. Clearly ISIS is not doing this. How can they then claim to be the "Islamic state"? Therefore, the true jihad and the jihad made by ISIS are at two opposite ends of the spectrum and one should not confuse ISIS and jihad as the same. Indeed, Jihad e Akbar and Jihad e Kabeer are the Jihads which should be focused on today. For this to be done, each and every human being will need to focus on the improvement of their moral and spiritual self. In order for Islam to spread and save mankind from losing themselves in worldly desires, we need to completely reform ourselves using the true jihad.

ABID KHAN SAHIB'S DIARY OF JALSA SALANA UK, 2017

(Only small portions of the diaries written by Abid Waheed Khan sahib are included in Ismael. Readers are encouraged to go to www.alislam.org/library/topics/diary/ to derive maximum benefit from these diaries)

(All Addresses and Sermons of Huzoor e Anwar during the recent Jalsa Salana UK 2017 can be viewed on www.mta.tv/jalsa-salana-uk-2017)

Inspection of Jalsa Salana UK

As per tradition, the inspection and official inauguration of Jalsa duties took place on Sunday, 23 July 2017. After spending the morning in his office, Huzoor departed from the Fazl Mosque at 3.25pm. The inspection was conducted at three different locations, firstly at the Baitul Futuh Mosque, secondly at Jamia Ahmadiyya and finally at Hadeeqatul Mahdi itself.

Whilst, Huzoor was at Jamia the heavens opened and the rain thundered down. The duty workers at Jamia had kept a stock of umbrellas and handed them to us as we arrived but the rain was so strong that even the umbrellas hardly made any difference. Yet, this did not stop Huzoor from conducting the inspection and, so after lifting up his shalwar a few inches, Huzoor walked through the Jamia grounds until he entered the Jamia building, where he was greeted by dozens of Arab Ahmadis who raised naaray (slogans) welcoming Huzoor. As the Jamia part of the inspection concluded, several young Missionaries lined up to wave at Huzoor before he departed.

Upon this, Huzoor said:

'You should offer greetings of salam with your mouth and not just with your hand!'

Observing Huzoor work

On Monday, 24 July, I went in for Mulaqat with Huzoor in the late afternoon as per my normal routine. As I entered, I saw that Huzoor was busy writing on a plain A4 piece of paper placed horizontally on his desk.

I could tell that Huzoor was writing one of his Jalsa addresses and so I remained silent and kept my head down so that I did not disturb Huzoor in any way. As he wrote line after line, I kept thinking to myself how this seemed like a moment where Allah the Almighty was inspiring and guiding Khalifa-Waqt.

Huzoor asked me about the Jalsa inspection the day before and I responded by saying we were lucky that the rain stopped by the time Huzoor reached Hadeeqatul Mahdi.

Upon this, Huzoor remarked:

'Even if it had continued to rain it would not have mattered! I would have continued the inspection in the rain as well. Why should a little rain stop us from our work?'

Huzoor's reassurance

That evening I also met Imtiaz Ahmad, a young Missionary from Canada, who had spent the past few years serving in Ottawa. He told me that recently he received death threats during two phone calls received at his home.

The person making the threats said that his brother had been killed in Afghanistan and so he was now determined to 'take revenge'.

Imtiaz sahib said:

'I told Huzoor about the death threats and he listened very carefully before praying that may Allah protect us. Then, in the most beautiful way, Huzoor lightened the mood by saying that I had now been reposted to a different city and so I should be safe! Upon this, Huzoor smiled and both me and my wife laughed and enjoyed Huzoor's kind humour and we felt extremely reassured.'

Huzoor's media guidance

We had reached Tuesday 25 July and I was becoming concerned about a lack of media interest in the Jalsa Salana. With the Grace of Allah, our Press & Media Office had a larger team this year and they had been working diligently over the past month reaching out to journalists and media organisations. Certainly, the team had put in a lot of hours but as we got close to Jalsa, there was a sense of frustration at the lack of results.

Hence, that afternoon, during Mulaqat, I sought Huzoor's prayers for our media efforts and informed him that so far, we had not received many positive responses.

Upon hearing this, Huzoor said:

'Do not worry, there are over 30 journalists coming from abroad and so they will cover the Jalsa even if the local ones are reluctant.'

Some media outlets had suggested their lack of interest was due to the fact that the Jalsa was an 'annual event', which we had invited them to in previous years and so they asked 'what was new?' and if there were specific reasons they should come this year.

When I mentioned this to Huzoor, he said:

'You should tell the journalists that if they wish to find out whether Islam really is a religion of extremism and terrorism they should come to the Jalsa. If they wish to find out the reality then it is their duty to cover it – put the ball in their court!'

Huzoor then smiled and said:

'You can also tell them there will be new things at this year's Jalsa and that they will only find out more when they come! You should not give all the details in advance, rather you should keep the journalists in some suspense as it might arouse their curiosity!'

An Emotional Khadim

'I know you have some difficulties in Jamia but do not worry because I pray for the young Missionaries like you.'

During that week, I spoke to a Jamia student from Canada, who I had become friendly with during the preceding weeks.

He told me he had faced some difficulties and struggles during his time at Jamia, which continued to trouble to him.

He said he had considered discussing the issues with Huzoor during his Mulaqat but had decided against it because he did not wish to be guilty of complaining or of increasing the burden on Khalifa-Waqt.

The young man told me that when he entered Huzoor's office, he felt a sense of despondency having made the decision to remain silent.

However, he was left astounded when Huzoor himself said:

'I know you have some difficulties in Jamia but do not worry because I pray for the young Missionaries like you.'

Not what it seemed

On the evening of 26 July, I was very happy, as, during my Mulaqat, Huzoor gave me some chocolates to take with me.

As he handed me the packet, Huzoor said:
'I hope you do not mind but I have already opened it and tried one of the chocolates. They were good.'
Again and again, Huzoor's humility leaves a person embarrassed and amazed.
In response, I said:
'Huzoor, knowing you ate from these chocolates makes them even more special for me.'
I then left Huzoor's office, and as I walked out, a staff member in the Private Secretary's office handed me a box which he said was a gift from Huzoor for me.
The next day, 27 July 2017, was the day before the start of Jalsa and when I entered Huzoor's office for Mulaqat in the afternoon, I could see that Huzoor was extremely busy preparing his notes for one of his Jalsa addresses.
Yet, as soon as I entered, Huzoor stopped his work and looked up at me and said:
'Abid only you could eat the dhooni (incense)! When I saw the wrapping, I also assumed it was Ferrero Rocher but then I opened the wrapper and the texture was completely different to chocolate! You should always be careful to read what something is before you use it or consume it! Now you should take some Nux Vomica homeopathy because eating incense is dangerous and can be poisonous!'
Huzoor then smiled and used an Urdu saying which meant that 'even educated people sometimes do the most foolish and ignorant things!'
I have to admit when Huzoor made this comment, I was quite pleased to be included in the class of the educated people, even if I was also being classed in the foolish and ignorant at the same time!

Meeting the media

During the afternoon break and the subsequent break periods during the Jalsa, I spent as much time as possible at our Press & Media office and met some of the journalists who came to attend Jalsa.
In our Press & Media exhibition, one of the things we had on display was a TV screen playing various clips from Huzoor's addresses and one female Muslim journalist spent a lot of time watching clips from Huzoor's speeches and also talking to different Ahmadis and learning about our teachings.
After concluding her visit, she told us that the experience of Jalsa Salana had a profound effect upon her. She said it had affected her mind and heart to the extent that she was considering accepting Ahmadiyyat and had taken away the book 'Conditions of Bai'at' to study.
Another female journalist, who had just started her career, said:
'As a woman and as a guest I feel I was treated with enormous respect and kindness and I was made to feel like my attendance was somehow really important, even though I am not a very prominent journalist yet. The hosts treated

me as a valued guest but also as a part of their family.'

When I first started working in the Press & Media Office, I believed that we should target mainstream media or those journalists who were more influential but, after some time observing my approach, Huzoor said something to me which was a lesson that has stayed with me ever since.

Huzoor said:

'I do not care if a journalist has a reach of 25 million or 25,000, we should seek to engage with them all. If the message reaches even a few thousand people it is something to be pleased about and so do not disregard the smaller outlets. Even if a journalist does not have any following, at least he or she will have learned the true message of Islam.'

That comment that Huzoor made to me years ago had a deep impact upon my thinking and I have seen great wisdom in following this instruction.

First Session of Jalsa Salana

At 4.25pm, Huzoor raised the Liwai-e-Ahmadiyyat (Flag of Ahmadiyyat) before proceeding to the Jalsa for the first session of Jalsa Salana.

During his address, Huzoor spoke about the need for moral reformation and improvement and quoted various teachings of the Promised Messiah[as] in this regard.

'May all members of our Jama'at prove to be true ambassadors of Islam and true examples of fulfilling the rights of Allah and of mankind.'

Huzoor said that true and sincere love of Allah was selfless and pure, whereby people acted according to Allah's teachings due to their love for Him, rather than for a desire for reward. Huzoor contrasted this with extremists and terrorists who conducted heinous acts in the name of Islam.

Huzoor said:

'No matter what they claim, terrorists have no love for Allah the Almighty and are not motivated by Islam because Islam teaches us to love all of humanity.'

Later in his address, Huzoor prayed:

'May all members of our Jama'at prove to be true ambassadors of Islam and true examples of fulfilling the rights of Allah and of mankind.'

A confusion removed

Later, Huzoor graced the afternoon session of the Jalsa Salana with his presence and delivered the traditional report highlighting the blessings on our Jamaat during the past year.

Furthermore, Huzoor also announced that the Jamaat had now been established in 210 countries of the world.

The issue of numbers of countries in which the Jamaat is based is something that has become slightly contentious. During the past year, a few people had approached me

asking about this. The people who have asked me have all said that, according to the United Nations, there are less than 200 countries in the world, yet our Jamaat is established in a number exceeding this total.

When I mentioned this to Huzoor after Jalsa, he smiled and said:

'We are not a political group who chooses to 'officially recognise' some countries, whilst deciding not to recognise others. There are many Islands in the world that consider themselves independent countries but according to the U.N. or official agencies they are not independent.'

Huzoor then took a break from the mail he was checking and took out his iPad, which was placed on a cabinet behind his desk. Huzoor went to 'Google' and typed in 'How many countries are there in the world?'.

I stood behind Huzoor as he looked at the results and he showed me how the U.N. had its 'official list' but that there were also dozens, if not more, islands or territories, that considered themselves as nations, even if they were not officially given this recognition.

Huzoor said:

'Now you can explain to people who ask you this question and if you remind me before next year's UK Jalsa then Insha'Allah I will also clarify it in my report.'

THE MEANING OF THE MUSLIM PLEDGE

ADDRESS BY HAZRAT KHALIFATUL MASIH V[ABA] AT THE CONCLUDING SESSION OF THE MAJLIS KHUDDAMUL AHMADIYYA UK IJTEMA 2017

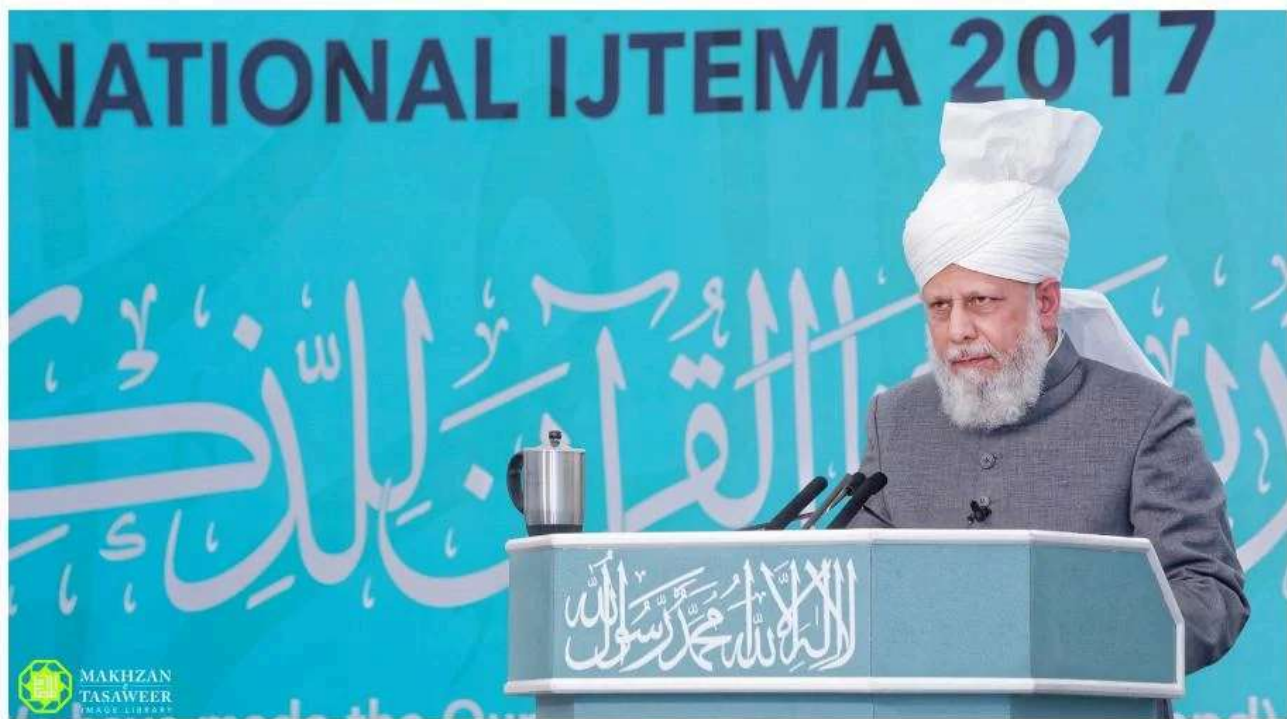
On Sunday 17th September 2017, His Holiness, Hazrat Mirza Masroor Ahmad[aba], the Worldwide Head of the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community and 5th Successor to the Promised Messiah[as], delivered the concluding address at the National Ijtema (Annual Gathering) of Majlis Khuddamul Ahmadiyya UK (Ahmadiyya Muslim Youth Association UK) held over three days at Country Market, Kingsley in Hampshire. The transcript of this address is presented below.

After reciting Tashahhud, Ta'awwuz and Surah Al-Fatihah, Hazrat Khalifatul Masih V[aba] said:

"With the Grace of Allah, in most countries where the Jama'at is well established, Majlis Khuddamul Ahmadiyya and the other auxiliary organisations have also been founded. And the primary reason why the auxiliary organisations were created was to ensure that great attention was placed upon the moral, religious and spiritual training of Ahmadis of all ages. The auxiliaries were established in order to bring members of the Jama'at closer to their religion and to explain to them their individual responsibilities. They also serve to guide the members of the Jama'at about how they can fulfil their material and worldly needs, whilst staying firm to their faith. Further, it is also the responsibility of the auxiliaries to emphasise the importance of serving both your faith and your nation to the best of your abilities.

As you all know, Majlis Khuddamul Ahmadiyya is made up of our male youth between the ages of 15 and 40 and Khuddamul Ahmadiyya is also aligned with Atfal-ul-Ahmadiyya, which caters for the moral and religious training of our young boys. Certainly, the older members of Atfal, aged between 12 and 15, are of an age where their minds are maturing and they understand the basic elements of their faith and the pledges they make. In light of this, today, I am going to speak about the most basic pledge that all Muslims make – the Kalima – *"Laa 'ilaaha 'il-lal-laah Muhammad-ur-Rasuu-lullaah"* – 'There is none worthy of worship except Allah and Muhammad[sa] is His Messenger.' These are the foundational words upon which the teachings of Islam are based and the respective pledges of our auxiliary organisations, including your Khuddam pledge, all begin with this declaration of faith. Thus, every Khadim and every Tifal who reaches an age of comprehension must pay serious attention to the meanings of this pledge and strive to fulfil it.

The first part of the Kalima is, *"Laa 'ilaaha 'il-lal-laah,"* which means that "no one is worthy of worship except Allah." Hence, the first and foremost principle by which any Muslim must live his or her life is that of Tauheed - the firm belief and acceptance that Allah the Almighty is One and has no partner. It is not enough to just repeat these words, rather they must be accompanied by a manifestation of one's faith through the worship of Allah and the most im-

portant and significant form of worship is Namaz - Salat. At various places in the Holy Qur'an, Allah the Almighty has commanded us to offer the five obligatory prayers, and so if we are negligent in our prayers, it means our declaration of faith in Allah is meaningless, without value and false. With great beauty and wisdom, the Promised Messiah[as] has elaborated upon this point. The Promised Messiah[as] says,

A person is only sincere in his declaration that 'There is none worthy of worship except Allah' when in reality his conduct speaks for itself and proves that, apart from Allah the Almighty, there is no one else worthy of worship and that there is no one else whom he craves and nor does he have any other objective besides Allah.

The Promised Messiah[as] said that only people who reached this state of pure devotion and loyalty to God Almighty, where they considered the rest of the world to be meaningless in comparison to Him, could claim that their proclamations of faith were true and not based on falsehood. He taught that a true Muslim is he whose heart and soul are intoxicated with the love of Allah and consumed by the belief that He alone is worthy of worship. This is the standard required, otherwise a person's proclamation of faith in Allah is reduced to superficial and hollow words.

The second part of the Kalima requires a firm belief that "Muhammad-ur-Rasuu-lullaah," that "Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah." The Promised Messiah[as] has explained that the essence of the second part of the Kalima is that the Holy Prophet[sa] is the best example for all of mankind, because he was the perfect embodiment of following the commands of Allah the Almighty. Indeed, in the Holy Qur'an, Allah the Almighty has deemed the Holy Prophet[sa] to be the perfect role model and guide for all humanity. Hence, at all times, every Ahmadi Muslim should keep the blessed example of the Holy Prophet of Islam[sa] at the forefront of his mind and seek to follow his noble character. Certainly, our youth must realise that this is the golden key with which we can unlock the doors to success and is our only hope and means of presenting the true reality of Islam to the people of the world.

In light of this, I shall now mention some characteristics of the Holy Prophet[sa] which we should learn from and seek to personally adopt. The love the Holy Prophet[sa] had for Allah the Almighty and his complete conviction in the principle of the Oneness of God was such that even the disbelieving non-Muslims could not deny or refute it. Indeed, following his claim, the disbelievers of Makkah would openly say that Muhammad[sa] has become besotted and consumed by his love for his Lord. In addition, the prayers of the Holy Prophet[sa] also demonstrated his complete devotion to Allah the Almighty. One prayer offered by the Holy Prophet[sa], which should be repeated by all Muslims, was:

O Allah, I beseech Your love and I beseech the love of those who love You. I seek from You the ability to do those things that are loved by You and that take me within reach of Your love. O Allah, establish such love in my heart for You that is far greater than the love I hold for myself, my wealth, my loved ones and the taste of cold water.

This beautiful prayer illustrates the Holy Prophet's[sa] complete fidelity towards Allah and we must seek to inculcate this spirit within ourselves. In today's world, people routinely give preference to their personal desires over religion, to such an extent that it does not even enter their mind to manifest their love for their Creator or to fulfil His rights. Even amongst us are people who are so obsessed with a desire to gain wealth and material success, that they forget to offer Namaz at the appointed times, or are so busy with

their family matters, that they ignore their foremost duty to love and worship Allah the Almighty. How can this be the conduct of a true Muslim? Only if we consider the love of Allah to be above all other things can we honestly say that we are upholding our belief that "there is none worthy of worship except Allah" – *"Laa 'ilaaha 'il-lal-laah."*

Further, for the establishment of the Unity of God, the Holy Prophet[sa] said that whosoever acknowledged the Oneness of God would be the recipient of Allah's Grace and Favours. The Holy Prophet[sa] said that a Muslim should declare the unity of God by praying:

لَا إِلٰهَ إِلَّا اللهُ وَحْدَهُ لَا شَرِيْكَ لَهُ، لَهُ الْمُلْكُ وَلَهُ الْحَمْدُ وَهُوَ عَلٰى كُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدِيْرٌ

There is none worthy of worship except Allah, He is One and has no partner; His is the true Kingdom, and all praise belongs to Him and He is the All-Powerful.

The Holy Prophet[sa] said that whosoever repeated this prayer one hundred times would be granted the equivalent reward of a person who had freed ten slaves, that one hundred righteous acts would be recorded in his favour and one hundred sins would be struck off from his record. Further, remembering Allah in this way would protect a person from the influence of Satan, from morning until night, and no other person would be considered better except he or she who had spent even more time in the remembrance of Allah. This shows the true value that lies within our declaration of faith that "Laa 'ilaaha 'il-lal-laah" – "there is none worthy of worship except Allah." When a person sincerely prays in this way there is no chance that they will be found wanting in their worship of Allah the Almighty.

Without a shadow of doubt, it was the Holy Prophet[sa] who scaled the highest possible peaks of worshipping Allah. No matter the circumstances, he would never allow anything to get in the way of fulfilling the rights of Allah the Almighty. For example, it is recorded in the ahadith that even during times of severe illness or injury, the Holy Prophet[sa] continued to excel in the worship of Allah. On one occasion, the Holy Prophet[sa] fell from a horse and as a result, his entire right side was severely injured and he was unable to stand to offer his prayers, but rather than forsake congregational prayers, the Holy Prophet[sa] continued to lead Salat whilst sitting. At a personal level, we all know what our intentions and standards of worship are and we know if we are trying our best to follow the example of the Holy Prophet[sa].

It is a cause of great sadness that there are many Ahmadis who sacrifice congregational Salat for the sake of their own small personal errands or just out of sheer laziness. Yet, without any shame or sense of embarrassment, they continue to repeat the words of the Kalima, claiming their belief that there is no one worthy of worship except Allah and that Muhammad[sa] is his Messenger.

As I said before, words alone are never enough, rather they must also be mirrored by a person's deeds and conduct. Despite being the Messenger of Allah and His most beloved servant, the Holy Prophet[sa] was forever overcome by the fear of Allah. He constantly urged his followers to remain anxious that, as a result of their negligence, they did not become the recipients of the wrath of Allah and deprived of His love. There are many narrations of the companions which tell us how the Holy Prophet[sa] would bow down before Allah and surrender himself before Him in a state of complete submission and humility. For instance, it is reported that when he prayed alone, people could hear the Holy Prophet[sa] weep with such intensity that it sounded like he was screaming and wailing in despair. Some companions described the sound of the Holy Prophet[sa] engaged in prayer as like a grinding mill in action, whilst others said that the sound was like boiling water in a pan.

This was the unparalleled standard of worship and of the fear and love of Allah displayed by the Holy Prophet[sa] which was an example for all of mankind to come. Unquestionably, in terms of the remembrance of Allah and gratitude to Him, the Holy Prophet[sa] reached the highest possible standards. No matter whether day or night, whether awake or asleep, whether in a group or alone, the Holy Prophet[sa] never forgot his Creator. It is narrated that the Holy Prophet[sa] told his companions that even when he was sitting in a group he would continue to offer Istighfar – seeking the forgiveness of Allah – at least seventy times.

Just consider that if the Holy Prophet[sa] considered it necessary to offer repentance so ardently, then how important it must be for us to constantly repent and seek God's forgiveness. Indeed, the importance of Istighfar cannot be overstated as it focuses our attention towards the worship of Allah and protects us from wrongdoing and sinful activities. Moreover, the Holy Prophet[sa] taught his followers that it was imperative to remain forever thankful to Allah for His blessings and that Namaz was the best means of expressing gratitude. Regarding his personal love for Namaz, the Holy Prophet[sa] said that it was the true source of comfort and peace for his eyes and heart and he would repeatedly pray that, *O Allah, my Lord, make me the person who always remembers You and is forever grateful to You.* In terms of love for the Holy Qur'an and obedience to its teachings, the Holy Prophet[sa] was the greatest example.

Hazrat Aishah[ra] relates that if a person wished to know the character and morals of the Holy Prophet[sa], all they had to do was read the Qur'an. Every pore and every fibre of the Holy Prophet[sa] was engulfed by pure love and reverence for the Word of Allah. Whenever any portion was recited he would become emotional and tears would flow from his blessed eyes. Once the Holy Prophet[sa] asked his companion, Hazrat Abdullah bin Masood[ra], to recite a portion of the Qur'an and after a while, he reached verse 42 of Surah Nisa, which states:

فَكَيْفَ إِذَا جِئْنَا مِنْ كُلِّ أُمَّةٍ بِشَهِيْدٍ
وَّجِئْنَا بِكَ عَلٰى هٰٓؤُلَآءِ شَهِيْدًا ﴿٤٢﴾

"And how will it fare with them when We shall bring a witness from every people, and shall bring thee as a witness against these!"

As he listened to this verse, the Holy Prophet[sa] could no longer control his emotions and, as tears flowed uncontrollably from his eyes, he gestured with his hand asking his companion to stop reciting. In another narration, Hazrat Abu Hurairah[ra] reports that once, during a journey, he had the opportunity to spend a night in the company of the Holy Prophet[sa]. He narrates that the Holy Prophet[sa] had only recited "Bismillah" – "In the Name of Allah" – when he became so overwhelmed with emotion that he fell down in grief. Hazrat Abu Hurairah[ra] said that the Holy Prophet[sa] recited "Bismillahir Rahmanir Raheem" twenty times and each time he would again be overcome with emotion and fall to the ground. Thereafter, the Holy Prophet[sa] explained his grief by stating that a person upon whom the Gracious and Merciful God is not merciful is most unfortunate. Hence, today, it is imperative that we bow down before that Gracious and Merciful God, worship Him, weep before Him, open our hearts to Him and seek His Grace and His Mercy and pray that we are never cast amongst the unfortunate ones.

I have spoken so far about the example of worship of the Holy Prophet[sa] and his relationship with Allah the Almighty, which helps us better understand the first part of Kalima that, "there is none worthy of worship except Allah" and shows us how he fulfilled his duties to God Almighty. Yet, at the same time, the Holy Prophet[sa] also perfectly fulfilled his duties to society and to mankind at large and it is essential that we pay attention to this sphere of his life as well, so that we have full comprehension of "Muhammad-ur-Rasuu-lullaah," "Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah". Only then can we begin to understand how the Holy Prophet[sa] fulfilled his duties as the Messenger of Allah and proved to be a true source of everlasting mercy for all mankind. In every respect, his character was flawless, beyond reproach and a perfect illustration of true morality.

A fundamental quality of a believer is that he or she should be truthful and fulfil their trusts and covenants. In this regard, even the opponents of Islam were forced to admit that the Holy Prophet[sa] was an example for mankind. For example, the testimony of Abu Sufyan, given at a time when he was an ardent enemy of the Holy Prophet[sa], is of great significance. Upon being asked by the Emperor of Rome what the Holy Prophet[sa] taught to his followers, Abu Sufyan testified that, *Muhammad[sa] says we should worship the One God, offer prayers, be honest and fulfil our trusts and pledges.*

As I said, this was the statement of a sworn enemy and testifies to the fact that the Holy Prophet[sa] preached only a message of fulfilling the rights of Allah and of mankind. The unconditional honesty and integrity of the Holy Prophet[sa] was reflected at all times no matter how challenging the circumstances. For example, in wars and battles, it was commonly assumed that the victor had a right over the spoils and could seize the wealth and property of the vanquished. Yet, the Holy Prophet's[sa] conduct in this regard was quite the opposite. Instead of seeking personal benefit and riches

for him and his followers, the noble character of the Holy Prophet[sa] demanded that no injustice was ever perpetrated.

For instance, the war against the Jews at Khaybar was an extremely arduous and demanding. At that time, because of the prolonged war, Muslims were subject to starvation. A Jewish Ethiopian shepherd accepted Islam and asked the Holy Prophet[sa] what he should do with the lambs under his control which belonged to the Jews. Whilst he could easily have ordered the shepherd to hand over the lambs, instead, the Holy Prophet[sa] ordered him to honour his duties to the Jews and to turn the lambs in the direction of their owners so that they could make their own way back. Rather than give in to any form of temptation at a time when he and his followers were famished and desperate for sustenance, the Holy Prophet[sa] ensured that the rights of the opponents were fulfilled and set an incomparable example of fulfilling one's trusts and obligations.

In a similar vein, whenever the Holy Prophet[sa] signed a treaty or covenant following the end of wars and battles, he always ensured that he and the Muslims abided by them no matter what. For example, after the Treaty of Hudaybiyyah, there were times when the lives of the Muslims were put at risk but the Holy Prophet[sa] never wavered from the agreement and continued to honour every pledge made regardless of the danger. In all respects, the Holy Prophet[sa] taught and practically showed us how we must give priority to our faith over all worldly matters, and we Ahmadis all make this pledge again and again, but regrettably, whenever personal issues arise there are many who choose to ignore it. For example, in Surah Jumu'ah, Allah the Almighty has said that when it is time for the Friday Prayers, Muslims should close their businesses and give priority to the worship of Allah. However, there are people amongst us who disregard this Qur'anic injunction. Thus, I say to all our Khuddam that they should keep this teaching ingrained in their minds and give full priority to attending the Friday Prayers, rather than giving precedence to worldly matters.

In terms of the true status of materialism and worldly pursuits, we should all pay attention to the following Hadith. On one occasion the Holy Prophet[sa] entered a market, with his companions walking alongside him, when he noticed a dead goat, with extremely small and deformed ears, lying on the ground. The Holy Prophet[sa] grabbed the goat by one of his ears and asked his companions if any of them wished to purchase it for one dirham. In reply, the companions said that if the goat had been alive they might have considered buying it, in spite of its deformed ears, yet how could there be any value in the dead animal. Upon this, the Holy Prophet[sa] said:

I swear that in the eyes of Allah, the material world is even lower in value and more debased than this dead goat and so do not follow materialism, rather always keep the attainment of the nearness and pleasure of Allah at the forefront of your minds.

Furthermore, it is quite common amongst worldly people to think that a degree of falsehood or deception in business or trade is permissible. However, such an attitude is an example of prioritising materialism over faith because Allah has deemed all forms of falsehood and deception to be sinful. The Holy Prophet[sa] warned his followers that there was an increased risk of falsehood when buying or selling goods, and so before conducting any form of business, he advised them to give some Sadaqah (charity), which would shield them from wrongdoing.

Whenever entering a bazaar or market, the Holy Prophetsa himself would pray:

O Allah, I enter this market and desire only that which is good for me and I seek your refuge from anything bad within it. O Allah, I also seek your refuge and protection from professing any form of falsehood whilst in this market or from any wrong trade.

The Holy Prophet[sa] also reminded his followers that, though a person may be able to sell goods on the basis of deception, by exaggerating their price or quality, there could never be any blessings in such dishonest sales. On the other side, the Holy Prophet[sa] gave the glad tidings to those Muslim traders or business people who were honest and fair in their dealings that on the Day of Judgement they would stand alongside the martyrs. The Holy Prophet[sa] also emphasised the importance of showing compassion to one's relatives and the blessings of keeping families closely knitted together. In this regard, the Holy Prophet[sa] said that to respond in kind to the love shown by your relatives was not an example of compassion and mercy, rather true benevolence towards your family was to mend the broken ties amongst them and to heal any rifts that existed. Certainly, this is a golden principle which is of great importance today, and if our youths pay heed to it, many of the domestic issues that arise in people's homes will disappear. In terms of his compassion towards Allah's creation, the Holy Prophet's[sa] example was the very best. Never did he let any opportunity pass by to help the weak and needy; rather, he taught that if a person helped his brother, Allah would help him and if he removed the difficulty of his Muslim brother, Allah would remove his difficulties on the Day of Judgment, and if he covered the mistakes of his Muslim brother, Allah would cover his mistakes on the Day of Judgment.

A very important Hadith, and one that we know very well, is that a true Muslim is he from whose tongue and hand all others are safe. However, despite knowing these words of the Holy Prophet[sa], there are many who fail to act upon them. If people lived by this teaching, all hatreds and conflicts would end – both at a personal level and amongst the wider society. This Hadith does not only instruct Muslims to abstain from harming others, it also directs them towards humanitarian efforts, because the deeper meaning of these

words require Muslims to actively seek to help and serve mankind. The best example of this was the Holy Prophet[sa] himself who was ever ready to assist the needy with his own hands and showered his love and mercy upon all deprived and vulnerable members of society.

On many occasions, poor and needy people would stop the Holy Prophet[sa] as he walked to the mosque or somewhere else and he never became irritated or impatient; rather, with great love, tenderness, and attention he listened to them, comforted them and helped them. Truly, we must all learn from this blessed example and realise that a true Muslim is he who considers the pain and grief of others as his own. Within the home, the Holy Prophet[sa] also set the best example and catered for the moral and spiritual well-being of his family. For example, he would wake his family in the night for Salat and called on other Muslims to do the same. Thus, our men should not only offer their prayers at the appointed times, but should also ensure that their family members are offering Namaz and waking for Fajr Prayer. This is something that Majlis Khuddamul Ahmadiyya should pay great attention to.

'A true Muslim is he from whose tongue and hand all others are safe. However, despite knowing these words of the Holy Prophetsa, there are many who fail to act upon them.'

As I said, in terms of his family home, the Holy Prophet[sa] set the best example and established the rights of women. Time and again, the Holy Prophet[sa] emphasised that a man must treat his wife with love, compassion and be fully respectful to her. He said that the best amongst you are those who treat their wives in the best way and that he was the one who took the greatest care of his wives. The Holy Prophet[sa] said that sometimes disputes arose between a husband and a wife, whereby they found flaws in one another or became irritated by certain habits. In this regard, he said that each spouse should remember that they themselves were not perfect and there would be things that the other did not like in them. Thus, it was far better to focus on the good qualities and those things that they did like about one another. With this teaching, the Holy Prophet[sa] has given us very beautiful advice, filled with immense wisdom, about how to maintain peace within our homes. It is also important that a husband speaks softly and kindly with his wife.

In this regard, Hazrat Aishah[ra] testifies that the Holy Prophet[sa] spoke in the softest tone with his wives and was extremely loving and caring of their needs. She added that unlike most of the men of that time, he would speak informally with his family and would keep a smile on his face within the home. Throughout his life, the Holy Prophet[sa] never once raised his hand to any of his wives or towards any servant, despite living in an era when such abuse was common and considered normal. Sadly, even today there are many men who become angry with their wives over small and trivial matters and so I urge the members of Majlis Khuddamul Ahmadiyya to swallow their pride and instead to follow the example of our noble Prophet Muhammad[sa], whose humility knew no bounds.

Remember, that the Holy Prophet[sa] said that men who were harsh to women could not be considered amongst the righteous. I have mentioned just a few of the qualities of the Holy Prophet[sa] and there are countless other examples which illustrate the perfect conduct of the Holy Prophet[sa] in all spheres of his life. It is not enough to just hear or read about his example, but rather we must seek to adopt and follow the character of the Holy Prophet[sa] to the best of our abilities. Only then will we be amongst those who understand the true meaning and status of "Laa 'ilaaha 'il-lal-laah Muhammad-ur-Rasuu-lullaah." Only then will we be able to claim that, having accepted the Promised Messiah[as], we are acting upon our pledge to bring about a righteous transformation in our lives

and are living up to the demands of the Kalima which is the foundation of any Muslim's life.

At the end, I will present the words of the Promised Messiah[as] which highlight his expectations of his Jama'at. The Promised Messiah[as] said,

Remember our Jama'at is not for the normal worldly people who say that they are part of a community, but feel there is no need for any practical manifestation. Unfortunately, this is the state of the Muslims of today, whereby if you ask them if they are Muslim they will reply 'Alhamdolillah', 'With the Grace of Allah', 'yes we are Muslims,' yet they fail to even offer Namaz or to respect the basic commands of Allah. Hence, I do not want you to be like those who only verbally accept with their tongues but do not take any practical steps. Remember, such people are guilty of laziness and this is not liked by Allah at all. It was this very state of the world that caused for Allah the Almighty to send me for the reformation of mankind.

Today, those who claim to stand with me, but do not make any practical efforts to reform and do not use their faculties to improve and who think verbally accepting is enough, it is as if they deny the need for my advent. Thus, if you wish for my advent to be in vain and worthless there is no benefit to having made this association with me. Rather, if you do desire to be associated with me then you must seek to fulfil the purpose of my advent and to further my objectives.

And these are for you to bow down before Allah the Almighty with sincerity and loyalty and to act upon the teachings of the Holy Qur'an in the way that the Holy Prophet (sa) and his companions did.

The Promised Messiah[as] further said,

In the eyes of Allah the Almighty, it is not enough for you to just accept in words and to have no passion or sincerity in your acts. Rather, always remember that the Jama'at that Allah wished to create cannot remain alive without practical measures and a true manifestation of faith.

Accordingly, we must always try to improve and reform and be sincere Muslims so that when we say the words "there is none worthy of worship except Allah and Muhammad is His Messenger," we understand its true meanings and are motivated to fulfil the rights of Allah and His Creation. We must endeavour to personally fulfil the mission of the Promised Messiah[as], which was to make the world recognise its Creator and to accept the Unity of God Almighty and to fulfil the rights of mankind. We must strive to further this mission so that the world, the majority of whom considers Islam to be an extremist religion that promotes terrorism, comes to realise that Islam is actually a peaceful religion that desires for mankind to recognise its Creator and to fulfil the rights of one another.

May we, through our conduct, convince the world that true Muslims are those who seek to build bridges of love and who seek to fulfil the rights of others at every level of society. May we practically demonstrate the fact that true Muslims are those who are striving to eradicate all forms of disorder and conflict from the world. May Allah grant us all the ability to fulfil this great objective – to understand the true reality of Islam – and to spread it to all parts of the world. May Allah the Almighty continue to bless Majlis Khuddamul Ahmadiyya UK and Khuddam all across the world in all respects – Ameen."

PURPOSE OF PLEDGING ALLEGIANCE

'All sincere souls who have entered the fold of this humble one should know that the purpose of pledging allegiance is to dampen the worldly ardour, so that the heart is engulfed in the love of the Bountiful God and of the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him), and to develop such a state of detachment that the Final Journey does not seem an unwelcome prospect.'

(Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad[as], the Promised Messiah and Mahdi, Announcement In: The Heavenly Decree, Islam Int'l Publications Ltd., 2006. p.73)

THE PROPHET MUHAMMAD[sa] LIBERATOR OF WOMEN

BY SYED ADEEL AHMAD SHAH

Adeel was born and raised in UK. He is a Waqif-e-Nau and a student at Jamia Ahmadiyya UK. He aspires to serve the Jama'at as a Missionary.

'At the dawn of the 7th century in Arabia, a lone voice of light emerged from an era of utter darkness. That voice taught absolute justice in interpersonal and international affairs, equality between men and women and an uncomprising zeal to establish universal freedom.

'By the age of eight, that young voice from the tribe of Quraish lost both parents and his grandfather – yet, he managed to find some comfort in his uncle's home. During the next three decades, he established himself amongst his people as a beacon of integrity, earning the names of As-Sadiq and Al-Amin.

'That lone voice emerged to be none other than the Unlettered one, the Seal of the Prophets, the Prince of Peace, the Comforter, the Orphan who adopted the world, the Holy Founder of Islam, the lawyer of all – be they men, women, children of elders – none other than the altogether lovely Muhammad Mustafa[sa].'

We all know that the Holy Prophet[sa] granted women:

- The Right to Divorce
- Inheritance
- Education
- The right to work and obtain a career
- The right to a Separate Income
- The right to own property

but my humble attempt will be to explore 2 avenues and see how the Holy Prophet[sa] handled these matters more than fourteen hundred years ago; thus truly becoming a beacon and liberator for women.

The two areas I wish to discover are 1. His general treatment of women and 2. As a husband.

Dr. Micheal Hart ranks the Holy Prophet[sa] as 'the most influential person in history' and 'a secular and religious leader'. Writing about the Holy Prophet[sa] and his favours to women, he says:

'I find in his character such diverse and manifold qualities, as it would be impossible to find in any other man, whose biography has been preserved by history. His services to help mankind are also commendable; he issued rights to those at a time when those particular beings were considered worthless; hard to imagine in today's circumstances but a magnificent achievement for those who hold knowledge about Arab history.'

The first topic, as mentioned, that I will briefly speak upon is the Prophet's behaviour in general towards women and how through this, women ultimately received the honour, dignity and respect they have. However, to understand Huzoor's attitude towards women, we need to first understand the condition of Arabia at the time of the advent of the Holy Prophet of Islam[sa].

We all know and acknowledge that during the time of the advent of the Holy Prophet (saw), women were treated with disgust, sold as gambling products, sometimes buried in infancy and treated as an item on sale. Indeed, as mentioned, at Islam's advent, it was a practise in Arabia for men to bury their infant daughters alive to spare shame to the family. The Quran categorically rejected this horrific and barbaric act, ending it once and for all. Muslims who engage in any form of 'honour killing' today do so in spite of Islam, never because of Islam. In short, nothing in Islam justifies or accepts any form of Honour killing.

The Promised Messiah[as], the most ardent devotee of the Prophet[sa] wrote:

'Once a Companion of the Holy Prophet[sa] asked him about the rights of women. The Holy Prophet[sa] said "Feed her as you feed yourself from what Allah has granted you; clothe her as you clothe yourself with what Allah has granted you. Do not slap her, do not use foul language with her, do not turn her out of the house."'

Despite being the king of Arabia and the purpose of creating the universe, the Noble Prophet[sa] would still stand up if his daughter walked in the room, would clean the place she would want to sit on, kiss her hand and would lovingly talk to her.

How can any allegations be raised that this man would have viewed women in a negative manner or taught his followers to commit any vile acts against them? In contrast, he formed an army of educated women, stating that knowledge was incumbent upon a woman just as it was important on a man.

The first person to grant him comfort after his appointment as Prophet was a woman. The person from whom half of religion could be learnt, as stated by the Prophet[sa] himself, was a woman. The first martyr in Islam was a woman.

There is an account of a man who threw his daughter purposely down a well. He narrated a detailed account of this to the Holy Prophet[sa]. He said that he had a daughter whom he loved very much. When the daughter was old enough to understand, and could walk, his father called her over to him. She came to her father because she loved him. But, little did she know that this father who was showing hopeless love and emotions would take her to the family well and throw this innocent, poor soul inside it; without showing an iota of remorse. He said he could recall that when he pushed her in the well, he could hear her heart-rending screams.

On hearing this, tears started to flow from the eyes of the Holy Prophet[sa]. Another person who was sitting there said to the narrator that he had brought great distress to the Holy Prophet[sa]. Upon this, the narrator fell quiet. However, the Holy Prophet[sa] asked him to relate the incident again. It is reported that the Holy Prophet's beard was soaked with the constant stream of tears flowing down his face.

The Holy Prophet[sa] said that a person who has a baby daughter and does not bury her alive and does not demean her shall be given entry to Paradise by Allah.

In terms of love and good treatment to wives, Hazrat Mirza Masroor Ahmad, Khalifatul-Masih V[aa] stated:

'The Holy Prophet[sa], who was the greatest champion of women rights, said that women are servants of Allah and not your servants; therefore, do not hit them.' Another exceptional quality is that when we study the financial establishment created by the Holy Prophet[sa], we find a remarkable and unique financial philosophy heavily in favour of women. It is crucial to note that Islam gave women rights of inheritance 1400 years ago. The point worth noting is that, this is a right that women before the advent of Islam were not given. Likewise, it is a right that women in the west only recently received through civil law and not religion.

In Great Britian the right to inheritance – under Married Women's Property Act 1884, was granted to women in '1884'. The difference in age is quite clear. In many countries, a woman has still no share in the inheritance of either her parents or her husband.

In matters of divorce, in Europe and the US, it was not the Bible that gave women the right to divorce, but secular and civil law. For example, women in the United Kingdom gained the right to divorce only in 1857 – and even then only if their husbands were cruel to them. British women did not gain individual divorce rights until 1891 – 1,300 years after Islam granted such rights to women. But cruelty from their husbands did not spare American women. In a heartbreaking 1862 North Carolina case, a woman petitioned the court to grant her divorce after her husband mercilessly horsewhipped her. The North Carolina Supreme Court's chief justice denied her, stating that the law gave the husband power to use such degree of force to make the wife behave and know her place.

French women could not legally divorce until 1885. Women in Latin America – a largely Christian region of the world – could not divorce until the late nineteen or early 20th centuries – depending on the country.

Moreover, Mark 10:12 states:

'And if she divorces her husband and marries another man, she commits adultery.'

As such, to avoid the risk of adultery, certain Christians denominations to this day have banned divorce altogether.

Islam was the first, and arguably the only religion to afford women equal divorce rights. Indeed, the West has only recently caught up with Islam in this regard. Several Ahadith also demonstrate that women have the equivalent power as men to divorce and can do so even if their husbands are blame-less.

In summary, some of the reforms Prophet Muhammadsa brought in relation to the rights of women as individuals are:

Until the late seventeenth century, women in many parts of Europe were considered to be the property of their husbands — a custom that was destroyed with the rise of Islam

Women could not inherit until the late nineteenth century, a custom that was destroyed by the rise of Islam

Widows had no rights of inheritance with respect to their husband's property - a custom that was destroyed with the arrival of Islam

Until the late nineteenth century women could not own any property of their own independent of their husband, a custom that was destroyed by the birth of Islam

Now, I move on to the second part of this article which is: The Prophet[sa] as a husband.

Through the Holy Quran, he taught 'They are a garment for you and you are a garment for them'. He showed how this Quranic injunction could be put to practise in every act he committed.

Christian Saints, at that very time, were going around citing disgraceful things about women, such as: 'women are the gate of the devil, the road to evil, the sting of the scorpion' (St. Jerome) and 'woman has the poison of an cobra, the malice of a dragon' (St.Gregory). The example of the Prophet[sa] as a husband is very instructive. Even his detractors admit that he was an ideal husband.

He always entertained a feeling of deep love mingled with respect for his noble wife, Hazrat Khadijah[ra]. During her lifetime his love was unswerving. Even after her death he never recalled her memory but with the deepest emotion.

'Never was there a better wife than Khadijah' he said on one occasion to his noble wife Aisha[ra]. *'She be-*

lieved in me when men despised me, she relieved my wants when I was poor and despised by the world'.

He used to help his wives in their household chores such as kneading flour for bread, fetching water, kindling the fire for cooking, patching his own clothes and cobbling his own shoes. No work was too low for him.

Hazrat Aisha[ra] narrates that the Holy Prophet[sa] helped her in the daily household chores, all this over and above his duties to the whole of mankind as a Prophet of God. This aspect of his character also impressed his companions immensely.

The Holy Prophet[sa] is reported to have said:

'The most perfect in faith amongst you is he who is most courteous, and the best among you is he who is best in the treatment of his wife; the more a man is good to his wife the greater shall be his value before Allah.'

(Tirmidhi, Book of Marriages)

On one occasion we find a narration of how he helped his wife, Hazrat Safiyya[ra], to get on a camel by placing her foot upon his knee. He would eat his meals with his wives and would drink water from the same glass, putting his mouth just where his wife had done. It is impossible not to feel that there was a simplicity, a delicate touch, an angelic grace about this remarkable man, who was the King of Arabia.

Hazrat Khalifatul Masih V[aa], whilst addressing the Jama'at said:

'The Holy Prophet[sa] has laid so great a stress on the importance of relations between man and his wife that once he said, "If a believer puts a morsel in the mouth of his wife out of love, Allah will reward him for it, because it is an act which will please his wife who would feel that her husband loved her dearly."'

(Bukhari & Muslim)

The Holy Prophet[sa] attached great importance to a husband's kind treatment of his wife. He observed, that after belief in God and in His Prophet[sa] and in His Faith, the deeds of a man in respect of his treatment of God's servants shall be subject to Divine scrutiny. The kind treatment of a wife holds a place of high priority, so much so that in the eyes of God the best of Muslims is the one who is best in the treatment of his wife. The Holy Prophet's[sa] advice on this point is an excellent illustration of this fact.

He said:

'The best among you is he who is the best in his treatment of his wife and I am the best of you in the treatment of my family.'

(Tirmirdhi - narrated by Hazrat Jabir)

The Holy Prophet[sa] redefined the relationship between husband and wife, one that would be based on complete compassion and friendship rather than that of master and slave. We hear how he would on occasions race with his wives, or playfully call them by a nickname or even how he would gently tease them.

He never raised his hands on them either. Hazrat Aisha[ra] testifies:

'The Holy Prophet of Islam[sa] never hit anyone with his hand; neither servant nor woman.'

He was so in tune with women's sentiments that he would take extraordinary care to never hurt those feelings.

On one occasion when he was lying down with his wife, the Holy Prophet[sa] made a very small request. He asked if he could turn his face to the other side of the bed so that he could remember my Lord'.

She of course agreed and afterwards heard the Holy Prophet Muhammad[sa] weeping and becoming overwhelmed with emotion in remembrance of God.

He felt that as it was his wife's time he should ask for her permission. This was a demonstration of the respect and care he gave to women; that they should not be treated as if they have no say in their affairs of home and family — their views, advice and even their permission must be sought if it affects their rights.

May God bless the soul of Muhammad, peace and blessings of Allah be on him, the Liberator of women, the Liberator of Mankind, the Champion of Mercy.

He truly was the liberator of women, who more than 1400 years ago set firm guidelines on the treatment of women, guidelines from such a book that the world is still reaping benefits from.

THE BLESSINGS FOR ENTERING A MOSQUE BEFORE THE

FRIDAY SERMON

BY KASHIF AHMED, PAKISTAN

While the majority of us Muslims know about taking bath, wearing clean clothes, brushing teeth, applying scent and that one earns great blessings of Allah for each step towards mosque, there are many who do not take care in reaching the Mosque as early as possible, and come at the last minute. The real implication of reaching the House of the Almighty Lord is, particularly for Friday prayers, entering it before the start of the Sermon as described in the following Hadith:

'On the day of Jumu'ah, the angels stand at the entrance of that Mosque in which Jumu'ah prayer is to be offered. They write down the name of the person who enters the Mosque first, and thereafter the name of the person who follows, and they continue doing this. The person who entered first will receive the reward of sacrificing a camel in the path of Allah; the one who followed him will get the reward of sacrificing a cow, thereafter a chicken, thereafter the reward of giving an egg as charity in the path of Allah. Once the Sermon commences, the angels close the register and begin listening to the Sermon.' (Muslim and Bukhari)

Such is the great standing of this Sermon that the ones who join the congregation prior to beginning of this process get noticed by the angels of Allah, the Exalted. They also get the rewards equal to spending for the sake of the Almighty. The ones, who reach after sermon has already started, are left in despair, as they are void of these great blessings. So, this address plays a big role in making the true disciples earn Allah's bounties, which is not the case with any other instruction.

Recitation from the Holy Book

The Sermon on Friday is considered as Zikr-e-Ilahi

(remembranceof Allah), and the Imam reads out lessons from the Holy Qur'an. Thus, it becomes a very vital process, which needs to be adhered to with great reverence and attention by the attendees of this gathering. And it is the foremost requirement for every Muslim to listen to the Khalifatul-Masih carefully for gaining wisdom and knowledge of the Islamic teachings, which is covered in his Friday Sermon. We are truly fortunate to be at one with our Imam every Friday by means of MTA International.

'Because when the Imam comes out (to deliver the Sermon), the angels come to listen to the Dhikr [remembrance of Allah]." (Bukhari)

The above stated Hadith shows that the angels of the Almighty God also pay attention to the words of the Sermon, and since it contains the references from the Holy Book, it adds to the significance of this address. It also means that the Imam of the Time's Sermon is

different from other normal addresses and it has a much greater spiritual impact on one`s heart and soul by remembrance of the Merciful Lord.

Listening to speech carefully

Just like we are directed to observe silence while praying, or listening to the Quranic verses, the oration on Friday also comes in the same context. That is why we are bound to follow the same pattern of behaviour during this course of action. The Holy Prophet of Islam, Muhammad, peace and blessings of Allah be on him, greatly stressed on remaining silent and making no sound during the Friday Sermon and even forbade telling others not to talk.

'Whoever says to his friend while Imam is delivering Khutbah on Friday "keep quiet" also commit absurdity.' (Muslim and Bukhari)

Although it is a virtue to inform others about performing good deeds, which also appears to be the purpose of the one who tells someone else to be attentive towards the Sermon, but the Holy Prophet Muhammad[sa] has prohibited us from doing so, as one can lose their own concentration and might miss an opportunity to seek the mercy of the Most Gracious, the Most Beneficent during this process.

Part of Friday Prayer

The Friday sermon is not similar to any other regular lectures and is mandatory to listen to and obey. The Prayer is not considered complete without the Salat. In face, it is a requirement, which in turn means that it is part of Friday prayer. It also has a specific format of deliverance and consists of two parts: the first one starts with praising the Lord, sending peace and blessings upon Prophet Prophet Muhammad[sa], and saying Shahadah (completion of faith), while the second one deals with recitation of Quranic verses and asking for mercy upon the fellow believers. This set pattern is the witness of its great place in Islam.

Not only does the Friday sermon being the integral component of Friday prayers have a great importance, but also the rest of the Sermons, lectures and addresses of Hazrat Khalifatul-Masih[aa] have utmost importance and are a great source of getting closer to Allah through recollection of His Greatness, and earn countless bounties from Him, ultimately making us count among the high ranks of believers.

MORALS *TRUE FRIEND*

SO THE BOY WENT TO HIS BEST FRIEND EVER. WHEN HIS FRIEND OPENED THE DOOR AND TOLD HIM HIS PROBLEM HIS FRIEND SAID...
YAAAAR! I'M SORRY. I HAVE GUESTS AROUND SO I DON'T HAVE SPACE AT HOME AT THE MOMENT. PLUS MY PARENTS DON'T KNOW WHO YOU ARE SO THEY WON'T LET YOU STAY.
HIS FRIEND SHUT THE DOOR ON HIS FACE. THE KID WAS SHOCKED.
...THIS WAS HIS BEST FRIEND.
HE KNOCKED ON DOORS OF ALL HIS FRIENDS BUT THEY ALL REJECTED HIM. HE DESPERATELY WANTED TO PROVE HIS FATHER WRONG. HOW COULD THIS BE??
THE SON RETURNED HOME DISAPPOINTED AND UPSET. HE FOUND HIS FATHER STANDING AT THE DOOR.
I DON'T UNDERSTAND. I THOUGHT THEY WERE MY TRUE FRIENDS.
NOW LET ME SHOW YOU... WHAT A TRUE FRIEND LOOKS LIKE.
THE FATHER AND SON SAT IN THE CAR. IT WAS A VERY LONG DRIVE. THE WHOLE TIME THE SON WAS QUIET. HE UNDERSTOOD THAT THE BOYS THAT HE CALLED FRIENDS WERE JUST USING HIM FOR HIS MONEY. AFTER THE LONG DRIVE THEY FINALLY ARRIVED.
BOTH FATHER AND SON WERE STANDING OUTSIDE AN OLD HOUSE. THE FATHER KNOCKED THE DOOR. A VOICE FROM BEHIND THE DOOR SAID:
WHO IS IT?
IT'S TAHIR.
THEN THERE WAS SILENCE. NO ONE OPENED THE DOOR. THE FATHER AND SON PATIENTLY WAITED. AFTER SOME TIME THE SON LAUGHED AND SAID:
AT LEAST MY FRIENDS OPENED THE DOOR FOR ME.
JUST WAIT...YOU'LL SEE...
FINALLY THE DOOR OPENED AND A MAN AND WOMAN WERE STANDING THERE. THE MAN WAS HOLDING A BASEBALL BAT AND SOME MONEY. THE WOMAN WAS HOLDING A POT OF FOOD AND SOME FIRST AID BOX.
SON, THIS IS MY BEST FRIEND QASIM.
WHY DID IT TAKE HIM SO LONG TO OPEN THE DOOR AND WHY IS HOLDING ALL THESE THINGS.
QASIM SMILED AND REPLIED:
WHEN I FOUND OUT THAT MY FRIEND TAHIR WAS AT THE DOOR I WAS JUST ABOUT TO OPEN IT. THEN I THOUGHT WHAT IF HE IS IN DANGER. SO I GRABBED A BAT. THEN I THOUGHT WHAT IF HE NEEDS MONEY. SO I COLLECTED THE MONEY I HAD BEEN SAVING. THEN I THOUGHT WHAT IF HIM OR HIS FAMILY NEED FOOD OR MEDICAL HELP. SO I CALLED MY WIFE TO GRAB SOME FOOD AND THE FIRST AID BOX. NOW MY FRIEND TELL ME HOW CAN I HELP YOU?
SEE SON. THIS WHAT YOU CALL A FRIEND. ALWAYS REMEMBER, A FRIEND IN NEED IS A FRIEND INDEED.